

Engine Company Number 23 Fire House
220-224 West Saratoga Street
Private

1903

The Engine Company No. 23 Fire House is one of the most sophisticated fire houses of the early 20th century in Baltimore, with a facade resembling an office building. It was probably designed by Theodore Wells Pietsch, an acknowledged local master of commercial building design in his later career. The fire station housed the quarters of Chief Engineer George W. Horton from 1903 until his retirement in 1912. Horton was the Chief during the time of the Fire of 1904, but was not in operational command of the firemen because of an injury shortly after the fire started.

Maryland Historical Trust

State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Engine Company Number 23 Fire House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 220-224 West Saratoga Street ☐ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ☐ vicinity of congressional district 3rd

state Maryland county

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Armand J. & Bernice A. Thieblot, Jr.

street & number 220 West Saratoga Street telephone no.: 539-7680

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland 21201

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber WA 3769

street & number Fayette and Calvert Streets folio 834

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Baltimore City Neighborhood Survey

te 1976 ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

city, town Baltimore state Maryland 21201

7. Description

Survey No. B-2140

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY:

The Engine Co. No. 23 Fire House is a two-story brick Renaissance Revival building with brownstone trim, built in 1903 on the north side of West Saratoga Street about one-half block east of Howard Street in central Baltimore, Maryland. The main elevation has two principal bays dominated by large round-arched windows on the street level which were formerly the double doors for fire equipment. The two bays are separated by a narrow center bay with a doorway on the street level. The former fire house is presently used as a combined residential and office building.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The principal elevation has Roman brick walls with double piers at the corners. On the street level, the piers are faced with paneled brownstone. The center bay is flanked by single piers, also with brownstone trim. The former truck doorways are round-arched with brownstone frames featuring carved bead-and-reel and acanthus moldings. Each has a large scroll console keystone. The openings are now filled with natural finish arched wood windows, added in 1981 when the building was converted to its present combined residential/office use.

The central doorway is framed by brownstone pilasters and a console bracketed scroll pediment. The door itself is modern natural wood framing a glass panel with a decorative iron grille. Above the door is a semi-circular window with a brownstone frame repeating the moldings and consoles of the larger arches.

A double band of brownstone separates the floor levels. The second story has two large 1/1 windows in each bay flanking a narrower 1/1 window in the center bay. The window frames are brownstone carved with running and egg-and-dart moldings. Above each window are flaring paneled blocks. The cornice has several bands of moldings including dentils, acanthus, egg-and-dart, and wall of Troy. The wall is corbeled just below the cornice moldings. The roof has a parapet with urn balustrade and paneled end blocks and center bay blocks. A flagpole rises from the roof.

The side and rear elevations are common bond stock brick with functional windows on the sides set within recessed bays. The decoration of the main elevation extends to the first bay on each side. The first story side windows have steel bars. At the rear of the building is the hose drying tower, covered with what appears to be modern asphalt siding. At the west side of the building is a large iron gate with a simple grid design. The rear elevation has no openings.

8. Significance

Survey No.

B-2140

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="radio"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				local history

Specific dates 1903 Builder/Architect attr. to Theodore W. Pietsch

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/orApplicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ GLevel of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SUMMARY

The Engine Company No. 23 Fire House is one of the most sophisticated fire houses of the early 20th century in Baltimore, with a facade resembling an office building. It was probably designed by Theodore Wells Pietsch, an acknowledged local master of commercial building design in his later career. The fire station housed the quarters of Chief Engineer George W. Horton from 1903 until his retirement in 1912. Horton was the Chief during the time of the Fire of 1904, but was not in operational command of the firemen because of an injury shortly after the fire started.

History and Support:

During the late 19th century, the Baltimore City Fire Department was in the process of a slow expansion with many delays in the appropriation of funds for new fire houses and equipment. The need for greater fire protection in the rapidly expanding retail district from Park Avenue west to Greene Street was emphasized by the 1873 Clay Street fire and by numerous smaller fires in the area.

By 1900, the city fire houses had assumed the form that was retained until the 1930's: rectangular, two-story brick buildings with arched openings for the equipment, and Renaissance or Classical Revival styles. Although the architect of Engine Co. No. 23 is not confirmed, Theodore Wells Pietsch is thought to have designed several City buildings, including fire houses, in the early 20th century. In association with Otto Simonson, he also designed several large office or commercial buildings, including the Paca-Pratt Building (NR), the Maryland Casualty Company building on West 40th Street, and the Southern Hotel.

Pietsch's best work, however, may be the small office buildings and facades in which he organized several historical periods generally based on Renaissance precedents to form a distinctive image. Two examples of this type are the Bowen and King Optometrists store (B-2091) and Louie's Bookstore and Cafe (B-1997), both dating from 1914–1915. The fire houses Pietsch may have designed were built between 1900 and 1904. During this period, Pietsch possibly worked for

(continue, please)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-2140

(SEE ATTACHED SHEET)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Baltimore East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

Zone Easting Northing

B

Zone Easting Northing

c

D

E

F

G

H | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

co-terminous with lot 50 ft. by 80 ft.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ms. Janet L. Davis, Historical Preservation Analyst

organization Comm. for Hist. & Arch. Pres. (CHAP) **date** 1986

street & number 606 Tower Suites, 118 N. Howard Street **telephone** (301) 396-4866

city or town	Baltimore	state	Maryland	21201
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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

the City Inspector of Buildings, Edward D. Preston, under whose name city improvements such as fire houses were designed and built. The facades of the stations resemble small commercial buildings in materials and decoration, showing clearly the designer's effort to conform the functional fire house building to an urban setting.

The Engine Co. No. 23 fire station is similar to the Engine Co. No. 31/Truck Co. No. 7 fire house built in 1901 on Greenmount Avenue in Waverly. It is possible that both were the work of the same architect, although the Saratoga Street station is larger and has round-arched doorway openings, which give it the appearance of a small office building. The Saratoga Street fire house, moreover, was to be the new location of the Chief Engineer's quarters and therefore had a somewhat larger living floor plan. It was opened on August 17, 1903 with ceremonies attended by most of the top City officials. A Baltimore Sun article describing the station just before the opening stated:

"The new engine house is considered a model of artistic beauty and convenience. It is two stories in height and built of burnt brick. The interior of the lower floor is entirely waterproof. The floor is of cement, the ceiling of ornamental steel, and the walls of white tiled brick. All the modern fire equipment has been installed, including a horse-releasing device which was invented by Fire Chief Horton.

"The second floor contains sleeping quarters and toilet facilities. Chief Horton will have a room there and will make the house his headquarters..." (Sun, Aug. 13, 1903)

Chief Engineer George W. Horton was appointed in 1901 and retired in 1912. The release mechanism he invented was called the Horton Trip, an electrical device which was activated by the watch man in each fire house which automatically lifted the horse stall latch or released its chain closure. The horse then moved into its place under the harness and the driver only had to snap the harness in place. The trip was installed in all City fire houses. Chief Horton was in command at the beginning of the Fire of February 7-8, 1904, but was shocked and burned slightly by a falling trolley line near Baltimore and Liberty Streets shortly after the fire began to spread. He was taken to his quarters at the Saratoga Street fire house and Second District Engineer August Emerich assumed official charge of the firefighters for the remainder of the fire.

9. Bibliographical References

B-2140

Baltimore Sun, Aug. 3 and 9, 1902; Aug. 13 and 18, 1903.

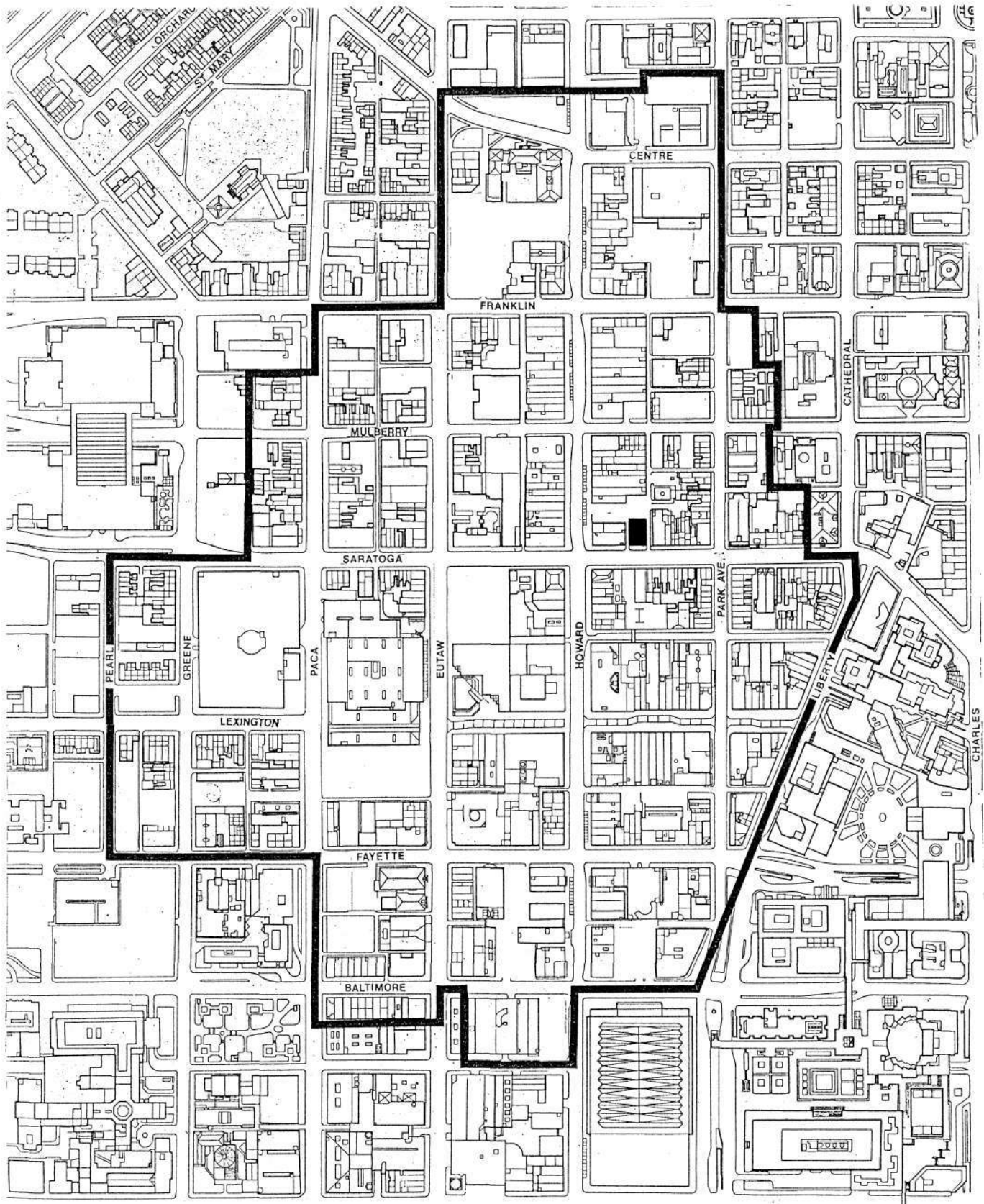
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Department Vertical File: Fire Engine Houses.

Murray, William A., The Unheralded Heroes of Baltimore's Big Blazes.

Baltimore: E. John Schmitz & Sons, Inc., 1969.

Poppleton Fire Station National Register nomination, prepared by Timothy L. Bishop.

Unpublished press release, "The Firehouse 220-222 W. Saratoga Street", prepared by North Charles Street Design Organization. CHAP file.



Baltimore Metrocenter Survey
 Market Center
 Engine Co. No. 23 Fire House
 220-224 West Saratoga Street
 B-2140





Engine Co. #23 Fire House B-2140
220-224 West Saratoga Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Janet Davis
January 1986
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
South elevation
1/5



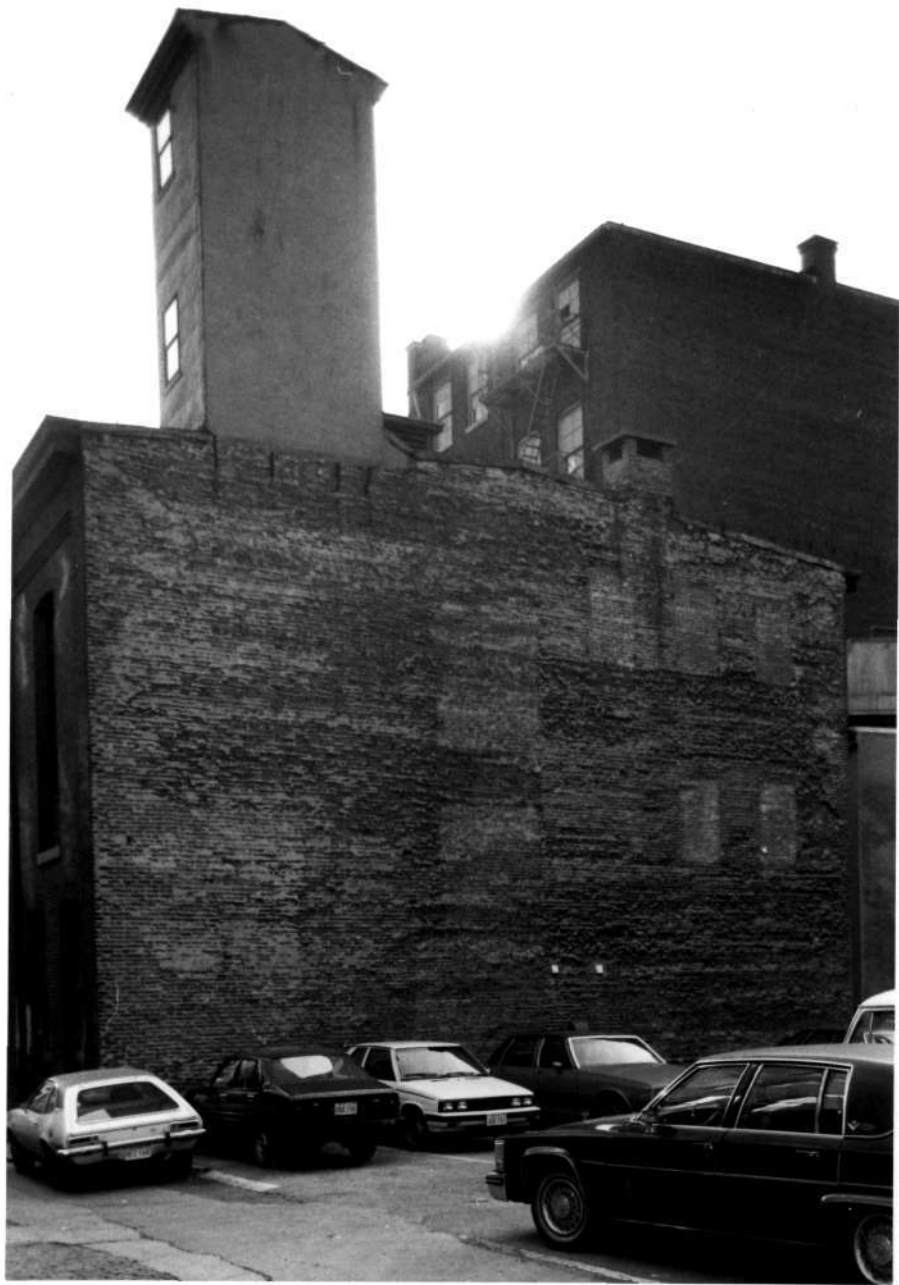
Engine Co. #23 Fire House B-2140
220-224 West Saratoga Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
March 1986
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Detail, keystone, south elevation
2/5



Engine Co. #23 Fire House B-2140
220-224 West Saratoga Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
March 1986
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Detail, window, south elevation
3/5



Engine Co. #23 Fire House B-2140
220-224 West Saratoga Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
March 1986
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
Detail, cornice
4/5



Engine Co. #23 Fire House B-2140
220-224 West Saratoga Street
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland
Photo: Caroline Hardy
March 1986
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
North elevation
5/5

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

220-224 W. Saratoga Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☒ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mayor and City Council of Baltimore Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office Room 601

Liber #: R0 1978

Folio #: 125

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21202

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

CITY, TOWN

Room 900

STATE

26 South Calvert St.
Baltimore, Md. 21202

7 DESCRIPTION

B-2140

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT☒ GOOD☐ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This building, conceived as an engine house, is three bays wide and two stories high. The facade is of stone and masonry laid in running bond.

The middle bay of the first story is occupied by a door flanked by pilaster strips. Above the door these strips meet a bracketed cornice which, with the two scrolls atop it, forms a pediment. Above the door is a semi-circular one light window within a moulded, round arch frame. A bracket serves as a keystone for the frame.

Flanking bays are consumed by wooden doors within a moulded round arch capped by a large bracket. The spandrels are filled by triangular mouldings. At either end of the first story are double piers which rise the height of the building. In the first story, these piers have rectangular incisions; above the frieze-like belt which spans the facade, these piers are flat masonry.

Second story windows are double hung 1-over-1, and are set in flat arched mouldings that have key and endstones. Above the blocks atop the piers is a dentil row, which is in turn topped by a roof cornice. The cornice supports a stone balustrade.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE**PERIOD****AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

see 301-07 M. HOWARD

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

ORGANIZATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY OR TOWN

Joseph Potts Planning Ass't.

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &

ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Room 900

26 South Calvert St.

Baltimore, Md. 21202

DATE

TELEPHONE

STATE

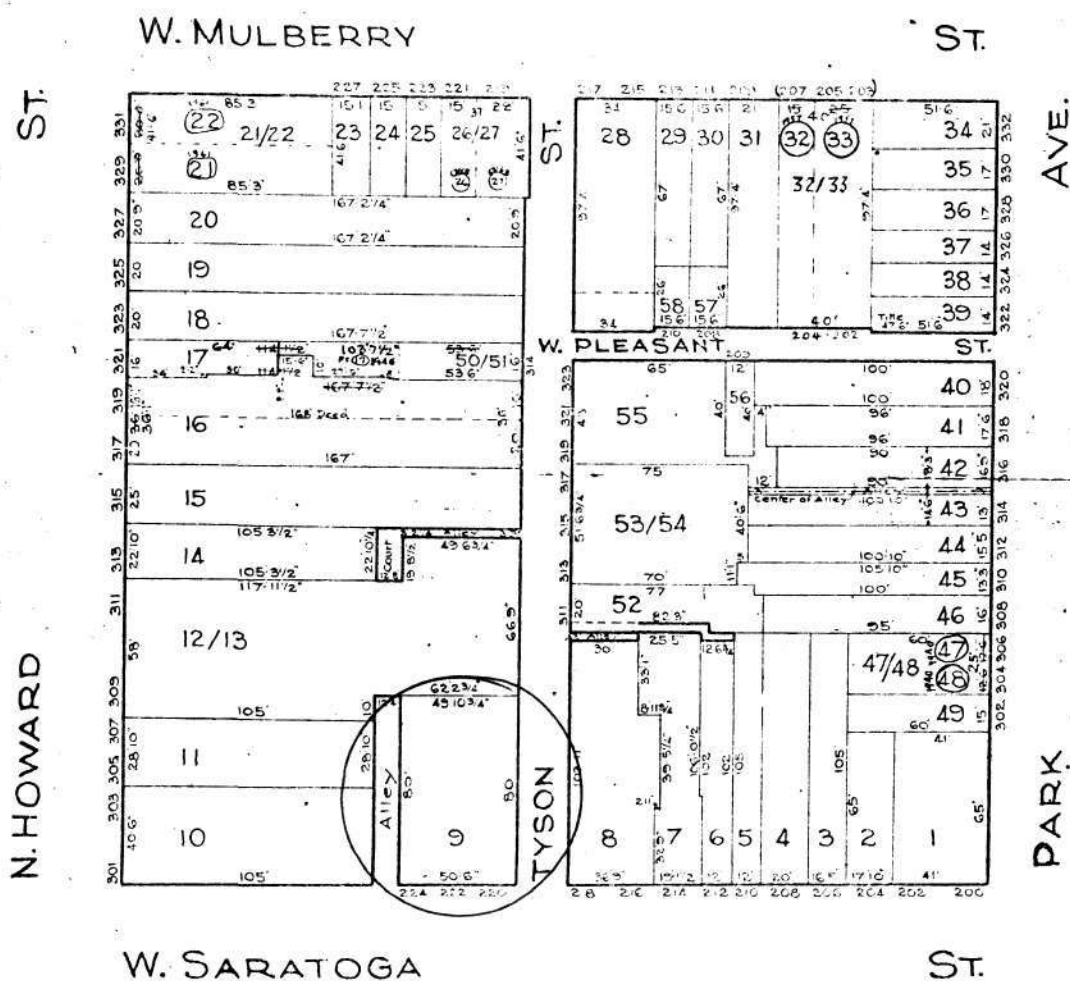
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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

B-2140

1. James Earl Ray b. 10/14/1928, MO, USA
 2. Lois Ann (nee) Ray b. 10/14/1928, MO, USA
 3. Part Lot 17 Abbeville in Lot 50/51 Franklin, P.O. Box 1, C.S. 3540
 4. Lot 32 & 33 in App. C in Lot 2634
 5. Lot 2632 Condo Per P.O. Box 1, C.S. 3540
 6. Lot 2632 Condo Per P.O. Box 1, C.S. 3540



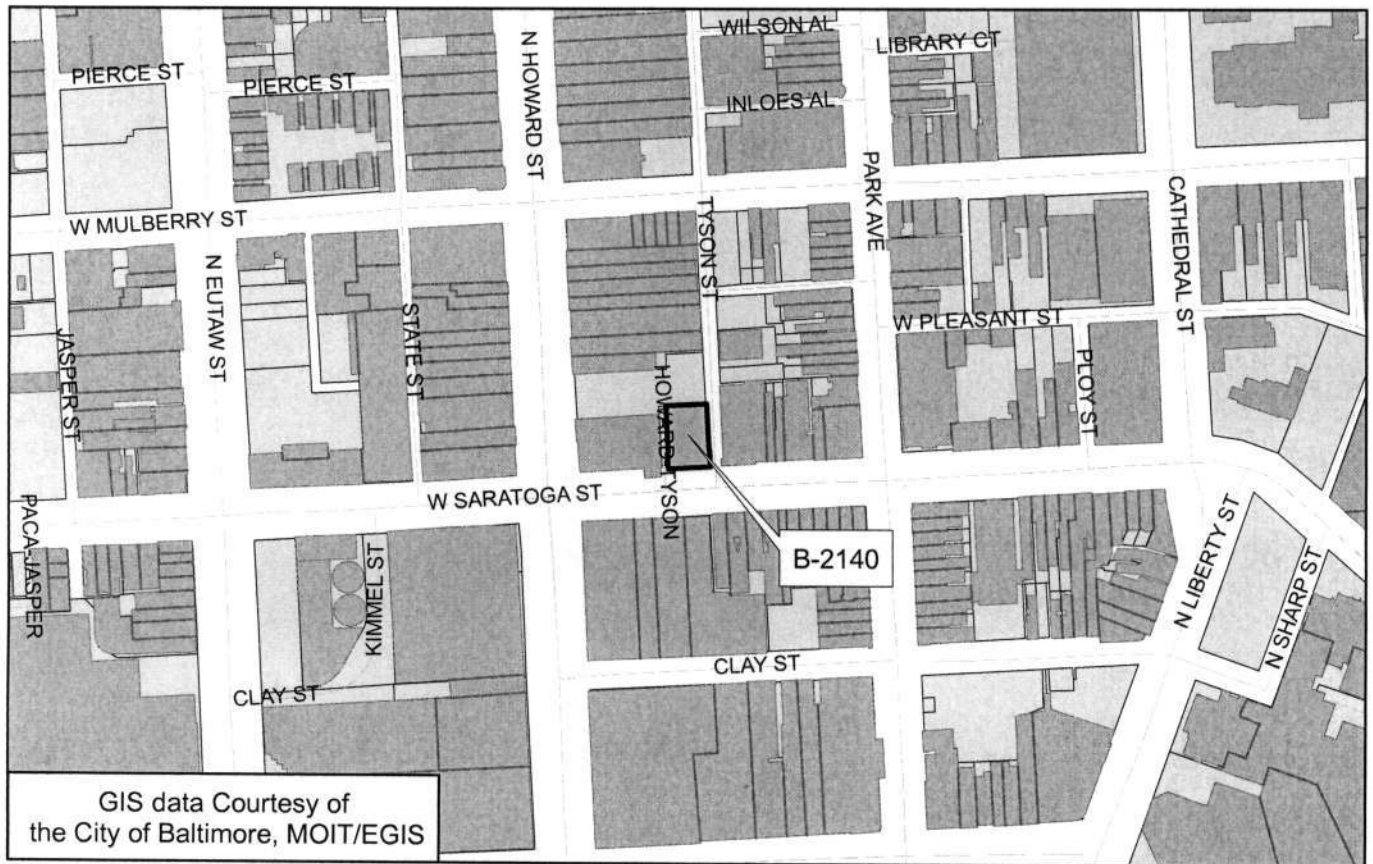
THIS IS A REAL ESTATE PLAT AS PROVIDED FOR UNDER ARTICLE 2, SECTION 10, CHAPTER 12, IT IS OF THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND WILL BE PLAT AFTER THE

CITY OF BALTIMORE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF PLANS & SURVEYS
PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION

WARD 4 SECTION 2
BLOCK 578

1908-1909: 687

B-2140
Engine Co. #23 Fire House
220-224 W. Saratoga Street
Block 0578 Lot 009
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad





B-2140

JP

BLK 578
220-24 W. Saratoga